

VZCZCXRO1079
OO RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW
DE RUEHNE #0746/01 1060528
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 160528Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6192
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7566
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1266
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1469
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6227
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3306
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1651
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6265
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1743
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7875

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000746

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: HOLBROOKE-MULLEN VISIT TO INDIA: OPINION LEADERS
SUPPORT AF-PAK STRATEGY, CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

11. (SBU) Senior Indian officials welcomed the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan in a series of meetings in Delhi April 8 with visiting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen. (The delegation also included National Security Council Senior Director for South Asia Donald Camp, Major General Burton Field, and Special Advisor to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Vikram Singh, in addition to Ambassador Holbrooke and Admiral Mullen's staffs.) Details of these meetings with Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan, and Ambassador S.K. Lambah (the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Afghanistan) are reported septel. In addition, the visiting delegation attended a round-table with Indian opinion makers and business leaders hosted by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Chief Mentor Tarun Das, which provided a range of informed views on the region.

12. (SBU) Ambassador Holbrooke lauded increased international cooperation on Afghanistan and reiterated his pledge to keep India abreast of developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Admiral Mullen solicited views on Delhi's perspective on U.S. efforts in the region, including an evaluation of successes and failures. Indian guests praised the Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategic Review for its broad, regional focus, underscoring the importance of understanding entrenched alliances in the region, especially between Pashtun clans and the Taliban. CII Chief Mentor Tarun Das commented that these linkages were most dangerous within the Pakistan Army, which included approximately 25 percent Pashtun soldiers. This has lead Indians to doubt that military equipment donated to the Pakistan army has been used by the Army alone. Several strategists indicated they had noticed an alarming trend toward increased religiosity in the military, even among Punjabi soldiers. T.N. Ninan, Editor of the Business Standard, warned that the extent of the trend could become tantamount to a religious revolution in Pakistan. Others recommended that the U.S. seek China's support to deliver a joint "enough is enough" message against the military's rising religious fundamentalism and linkages with the Taliban. The group echoed the Indian Foreign Ministry's consistent theme that reform of Pakistan's military establishment was central to any effort to stabilize Pakistan.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador Holbrooke and Admiral Mullen welcomed input on increasing India's role in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Indian guests speculated that the U.S. and NATO needed to build up the Afghan army before India would consider sending additional human resources beyond the 4,000 Indians on the ground in Afghanistan. Regarding aid projects, Tarun Das commented that India "gets more bang for the buck" at the grassroots level in Afghanistan and could advise the U.S. and other donors on best practices. All attendees agreed that agricultural development was essential to success in Afghanistan, which could benefit from the entire subcontinent as its export market. Participants suggested that India's contribution could extend beyond development to include military training. To circumvent Pakistani insecurities, Afghan security forces could train in India.

¶4. (SBU) Several participants emphasized that the Af-Pak issue should be only one aspect of the strategic Indo-U.S. relationship, which involves the shared goal of regional stability. The participants agreed the Civil Nuclear Initiative and increased defense cooperation forged a "real" bilateral relationship on which the Obama administration should build. The next steps include moving forward on civil nuclear cooperation, the Bilateral Investment Treaty, and an End-Use Monitoring agreement. Participants agreed that improved U.S.-India relations were not motivated by a desire to counter China's influence in Asia, participants alluded to "deep concerns" over their neighbor's regional ambitions and suggested that the U.S. should be wary of China's assertive

NEW DELHI 00000746 002 OF 002

policies.

¶5. (U) Ambassador Holbrooke cleared this message.

BURLEIGH